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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

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Landmark/District:	<b>Parkview School Modernization</b>	( <b>x</b> ) Agenda
Address:	<b>3570 Warder Street, NW</b>	( ) Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>June 28, 2012</b>	( <b>x</b> ) Alteration
Case Number:	<b>12-363</b>	( ) Addition
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Andrew Lewis</b>	( ) Demolition
		( <b>x</b> ) Conceptual Design

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The District of Columbia Departments of General Services (DGS) and Public Schools (DCPS) propose to implement Phase I modernization plans at the historic Park View School (aka Bruce Monroe Elementary School at Park View). The scope of work is relatively limited and consists of adapting portions of the school's entry hall and auditorium for a "Welcome Center," installing an exterior ADA ramp, and making minor improvements to the corridors and classrooms.

### **Park View School**

The three-story Park View School was designed by Washington DC's first Municipal Architect, Snowden Ashford, and constructed in 1916. As characterized in the recent landmark designation adopted by the Board on May 24, 2012, the school is "...imposing for its Collegiate Gothic or Elizabethan architecture—with elaborate limestone detail, high parapets and raised basement—more similar to contemporaneous high schools than to the modest Victorian and Colonial Revival elementary schools that preceded and followed it. A Jacobean balustrade encloses a raised, brick entry court. And very unusual for an elementary school, an auditorium wing backs the central entry/administrative block. Matching the ornate building exterior, the auditorium's timber purlin and principal-rafter system is supported by elaborate, medieval-looking scissor trusses." Due to overcrowding, two classroom and gymnasium wings were constructed in 1931 to match the style of the original building.

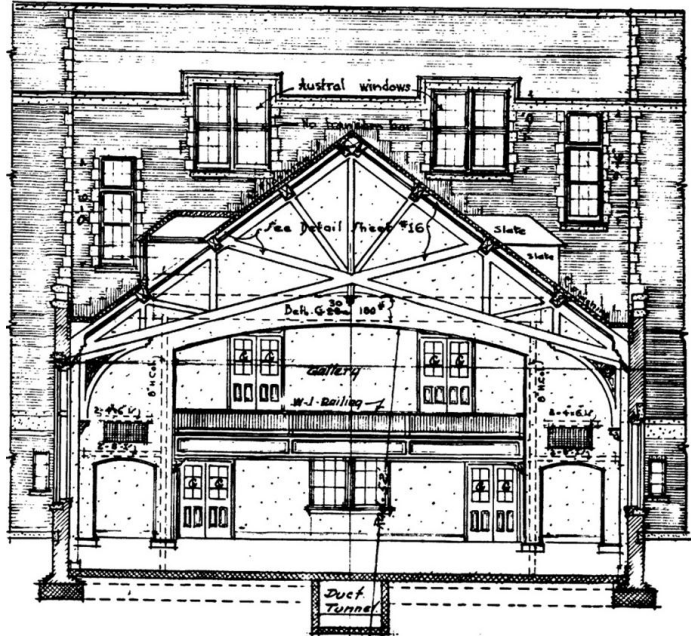
The aforementioned auditorium is notable not only because of its elaborate architectural features, but also because it was the result of extensive advocacy efforts on the part of the Park View Citizens' Association to incorporate a facility for community use into the school. Shortly after it was completed, the auditorium hosted plays, orchestral performances and other social events. And until 1949, Park View was the only elementary school that included a space dedicated for use solely as an auditorium.

### **Interior Work**

As the name implies, "Welcome Centers" house most of the administrative functions and provide students and visitors with a central location to obtain information about the school. These centers are common to every major school modernization project but the need for such a facility at Park View is particularly important because the school's split-level design

requires guests to choose between going up or down stairs immediately upon entry. However, no architectural cues exist to indicate which direction should be taken.

Originally, the auditorium's two sets of double doors (see image to the right) might have suggested a destination but the doors were removed at some point and the large openings were filled in and fitted with smaller, non-descript metal doors. The central window indicated on the lower level was also removed or never existed. The current proposal will restore the full sized openings and introduce new doors, sidelights and multi-light transoms that are based on the historical precedents. An additional window and transom will be inserted between the original openings to provide visitors with a view directly into the "Welcome Center" from the main entry level. A



drywall ceiling (rather than a drop ceiling) that resembles the original plaster will be used to hide new building systems and a historically appropriate pendant light reminiscent of the existing auditorium fixtures will be installed in the main hall.

Work within the auditorium itself will be limited to the balcony which no longer retains its original seating and has been significantly altered by a relatively recent, full-height wall punctuated by one, offset "plastic vision panel." The current proposal will replace the solid wall with full-height glass set back from the decorative wooden balustrade. This will restore views to and from the auditorium and allow the balcony to once again be perceived as a part of the auditorium space.

The remaining interior work is being carried out in non-designated areas but is being reviewed by the SHPO as a DC Government Project. The scope includes replacing vinyl composite tile with new flooring, removing existing conduit and introducing floating ceilings to hide new building systems. The new ceilings will be recessed from the edges of the corridors and the classroom walls that contain windows in order to maximize visibility and natural light. All of the original wainscoting and wooden trim within the classrooms will be preserved.

## Exterior Work

The external ramps necessary to meet ADA requirements constitute nearly all of the work proposed for the exterior of the school. The southeast corner was selected as the location for the ramps because it is nearly level with Warder Street and requires the least regarding while still providing a very prominent location for an entrance. The proposed modifications include

the introduction of two accessible ramps – one leading directly from the sidewalk and the other directly adjacent to the school’s southern entrance – and the minor landing adjustments and other small alterations required to install a new lift just inside the southern entrance to the school.

### **Evaluation**

Although the proposed “Welcome Center” will require some modifications to the auditorium, the proposed changes appear reasonable, are limited to the balcony and are necessary to achieve one of the primary goals identified for all school modernization projects. Moreover, the center’s design is based on historic drawings, incorporates some restorative elements and is fully reversible. The rest of the auditorium will remain untouched.

The SHPO believes that all remaining interior work will have “no adverse effect” on the historic school. Similarly, the proposed ADA ramp will be minimally visible, at most, and will require no alteration to the school’s historically significant raised, brick entry court.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Board approve of the conceptual design for the proposed modernization work and delegate the remaining design review to the staff.